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ABSTRACT

A study tested the notion that falling in love causes changes in love styles, relational message interpretations, and personality characteristics such as self-monitoring. Subjects, 209 undergraduate communication students, completed measures of love styles, self-monitoring, and relational message interpretations. In addition, participants indicated whether or not they were in love. Participation for students partially fulfilled a research requirement for either a public speaking or interpersonal communication class. If falling in love causes drastic changes in personality, relational message interpretations, and love styles, partial correlations between these variables should be zero when being in love is controlled for. Results indicated that partial correlations were slightly smaller than their zero-order counterparts. Pairs of variables with significant zero-order correlations, however, tended to also have significant partial correlations. Findings suggest that being in love does not totally account for the covariation of self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message interpretations. (Contains 23 references and 6 tables of data.) (RS)

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Love Styles, Self-Monitoring, and Relational Message Interpretation:

What's Being In Love Got To Do With It?

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Love Styles, Self-Monitoring, and Relational Message Interpretation:

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Abstract

This research attempts to test the notion that falling in love causes changes in love styles, relational message interpretations, and personality characteristics such as self-monitoring. Two-hundred-nine undergraduate communication students completed measures of love styles, self-monitoring, and relational message interpretations. In addition, participants indicated whether or not they were in love. If falling in love causes drastic changes in personality, relational message interpretations, and love styles, partial correlations between these variables should be zero when being in love is controlled for. Results indicate that partial correlations were slightly smaller than their zero-order counterparts. Pairs of variables with significant zero-order correlations, however, tended to also have significant partial correlations. Conclusions indicate that being in love does not totally account for the covariation of self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message interpretations.

Love Styles, Self-Monitoring, and Relational Message Interpretation:

What's Being In Love Got To Do With It?

The arts and media have presented many examples of lovers who exhibit different styles of love; e.g., Romeo and Juliet; Ricky and Lucy; and Harry and Sally. Popular music has also long served as a forum for describing varying love styles. For example, a unique love style is described in the song "I feel better than James Brown,":

When we were in love, I used to pretend that you didn't exist.

That way, I loved you more (Was & Was, 1990).

Explicating Love and Love Styles

Love has also received considerable attention from both the research community (e.g., Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992a, 1992b; Sternberg and Barnes, 1988) and the popular press (e.g., Buscaglia, 1972). The scientific study of love has bloomed in the past decade despite difficulty in conceptualizing and operationalizing the construct (Murstein, 1988). Many theorists have tried to conceptually define love, however, these definitions fail to match love's scope. Unidimensional definitions, for example, leave readers wondering if that is all there is to love.

One method of dealing with this conceptual richness is to define love as being multidimensional. This study will focus on one such multidimensional conceptualization, specifically Lee's (1973, 1988) love styles. Two primary goals drive this study. This study's primary goal is to investigate how Lee's six styles of love, as measured by Hendrick

and Hendrick's (1986) Love Attitude Scale, relate to the personality dimension of self-monitoring and to how lovers interpret relational messages sent by their partner. In addition, this study will determine how being in love influences the relationship between love styles, self-monitoring, and relational message interpretation.

Lee (1973, 1988) described six love styles; three primary (eros, ludus, and storge) and three secondary (pragma, agape, and mania). Lee described primary styles as possessing distinct characteristics and serving as building blocks for the secondary styles. Secondary love styles are described as unique combinations of two primary love styles. While the six love styles are relatively distinct, they are not mutually exclusive. A person can, and probably will, exhibit a combination of two or more love styles. Each of Lee's love styles will be discussed in turn.

Eros [passionate love]. Eros is full of passion and sexuality. Erotic lovers are attracted to the physical characteristics of real or potential partners. They know what physical characteristics they want their partner to possess and know a potential love partner when they see one (or more). Erotic lovers believe in and experience love at first sight. As such, Lee (1988) notes that in eros, love is very much not blind. Eros regularly begins with an intense physical attraction toward one's partner; the cornerstone of erotic love.

Ludus [playful love]. Ludic lovers see love as a game that is to be played cunningly for all that it is worth. Ludic lovers see love as exciting and will remain in a relationship (or multiple simultaneous

relationships) only as long as the 'game' remains fun. Commitment is not the ludic lovers' strong suit. For the ludic lover, sex is an enjoyable, but purely physical part of a relationship.

Storge [friendship love]. Storgic love develops from a strong sense of friendship with the partner. If eros is characterized by love at first sight, storge is love as 'evolution.' Storgic love is characterized by a deep caring and respect for the partner.

Mania [obsessive love]. A combination of eros and ludus, mania represents a contradiction in love. On the one hand, mania represents an obsessive preoccupation with one's partner, is "intensely jealous and possessive, and in need of repeated assurances of being loved" (Lee, 1988, p. 43). On the other hand, the manic lover holds back from total loving of the partner out of an irrational fear of being abandoned.

Pragma [shopping-list love]. A combination of ludus and storge, the pragmatic lover represents a cognitive (as opposed to an emotional) lover. The pragmatic lover has a number of characteristics that they are looking for in a romantic partner and systematically searches for a partner possessing those characteristics. Pragmatic love is the outcome of meeting another person with the requisite characteristics.

Agape [all-giving love]. A combination of eros and storge, agape is unconditional. The agapic lover is altruistic, willing to give up everything for their lover. Where ludic lovers enter a love relationship for what it can do for themselves, the agapic lover enters into a relationship considering how it can help the partner.

Personality and Love Styles

Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) contend that the process of falling in love causes a number of changes in a person's love styles, sexual attitudes, and personality. Specifically, they found that individuals who reported being in love scored higher on eros and agape and lower in ludus than did individuals not in love. Moreover, compared to those individuals not currently in love, people in love were lower self-monitors, exhibited higher self-esteem, and were lower in sensation-seeking. From these data, Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) argued that "falling in love may be a powerful stimulus to wide-ranging changes in self-perceptions" (p. 180). For example, they argue that falling in love lowers barriers and creates greater openness in communication that should lead to lower self-monitoring. Put another way, Hendrick and Hendrick assert that falling in love changes one's personality.

An alternative explanation for Hendrick and Hendrick's (1988) results, however, is that differences in self-monitoring influence the extent to which a person seeks out or avoids particular kinds of dating entanglements. In particular, there are ample data to suggest that differences in self-monitoring may influence how quickly a person might fall in and/or out of love. Self-monitoring may also predispose them to seek out various levels of commitment in relationships. To investigate such a possibility, the nature of self-monitoring and the extent to which self-monitoring influences relational processes needs to be discussed.

Self-monitoring. Snyder (1974) asserted that people differ in the extent to which they can monitor and modify their self-presentation and expressive behavior to meet the shifting demands of different social situations. He referred to this individual difference characteristic as self-monitoring and divided the world into low and high self-monitors. According to Snyder (1974) high self-monitors are individuals who, out of a concern for social appropriateness, scan the social context for clues as to what is appropriate behavior. High-self-monitors also have the motivation and ability to modify their behavior to match what is appropriate for the situation. Snyder (1974) described low self-monitors, on the other hand, as not so concerned with social appropriateness, not as aware of others' behavior in social settings, and lacking the motivation and/or ability to modify their behavior (Snyder, 1974).

Self-monitoring and love styles. Considerable data are consistent with the hypothesis that low and high self-monitors take different approaches to dating relationships. From this literature, Snyder and Simpson (1987) concluded that high self-monitors "tend to adopt an orientation toward and preference for establishing and maintaining less close and rather non-exclusive romantic relationships" (p. 56). Low self-monitors, on the other hand, "tend to adopt an orientation toward and preference for establishing and maintaining close and relatively exclusive romantic relationships" (Snyder & Simpson, 1987, p. 56).

This difference between low and high self-monitors in their orientation toward committed or uncommitted relationships may reflect

differences in love styles. The description of the high self-monitor in dating relationships is consistent with Lee's description of eros and ludus. High self-monitors pay attention to, and base dating choices, on their partner's physical attractiveness (as do erotic lovers; Glick, 1985; Snyder, Berscheid, & Glick, 1985). Consistent with erotic lovers' passion, high self-monitors also tend to be more sexually experienced (Snyder, Simpson, & Gangstead, 1986) and engage in more sexual behavior on first dates (Johnson & Mongeau, 1993).

High self-monitors are also likely to date multiple partners and more likely to date someone other than the current 'steady' dating partner (Snyder & Simpson, 1984; Studies 1-3). Dating multiple partners simultaneously is consistent with the ludic lover who plays love as a game and stays in the relationship only for the fun of it.

The description of the low self-monitor in dating relationships, on the other hand, appears consistent with pragma, storge, and agape. Low self-monitors appear committed to relationships, likely to date a single partner for a long period of time (Snyder & Simpson, 1984; Studies 1-3). Low self-monitors are less likely to be sexually experienced (Snyder et al., 1986) and engage in less sexual behavior on first dates (Johnson & Mongeau, 1993). This appears consistent with storgic love that develops out of a sense of friendship and caring.

Low self-monitors pay more attention to, and base their dating choices on, their partner's personality characteristics. Personality characteristics are much more difficult to identify quickly than is physical attractiveness (Glick, 1985; Snyder et al., 1985). Low self-

monitors' relationships begin more slowly and build to enhanced levels of intimacy later in the course of the relationship (Snyder & Simpson, 1984; Study 4). This description appears consistent with the pragmatic love style in which the partner has a number of characteristics they are looking for and systematically searches out a partner with those characteristics.

Finally, low self-monitors prefer monogamous relatively long-term dating relationships that develop relatively slowly. The monogamous long-term nature of low self-monitor's dating relationships seems the optimal culture to allow the development of agape, unconditional caring for the partner.

In summary, low and high self-monitors take different approaches to dating relationships. Specifically, self-monitoring influences choices in a relational partner, commitment to a relationship, relational trajectories, and sexual attitudes and behaviors. These differences, moreover, are consistent with Lee's love styles. Therefore, the following five hypotheses are generated.

Hypothesis 1: Self-monitoring will be positively correlated with eros.

Hypothesis 2: Self-monitoring will be positively correlated with ludus.

Hypothesis 3: Self-Monitoring will be negatively correlated with storge.

Hypothesis 4: Self-monitoring will be negatively correlated with pragma.

Hypothesis 5: Self-monitoring will be negatively correlated with agape.

It is more difficult to develop predictions relating self-monitoring to mania. Therefore, a research question is posited.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between self-monitoring and mania?

Love Styles, Self-Monitoring, and Relational Messages

Early relational message research in communication centered nearly exclusively on the issue of dominance (e.g., Millar and Rogers, 1976; Rogers & Farace, 1975). Taking a broader view, however, Burgoon and Hale (1984) defined relational messages as "those verbal and nonverbal expressions that indicate how two or more people regard each other, regard their relationship, and regard themselves within the context of the relationship" (p. 193). Burgoon and Hale's preferred measure of relational message dimensions contains seven dimensions. Three of these dimensions measured various aspects of intimacy (i.e., immediacy-affection, similarity-depth, and receptivity-trust). Other relational message dimensions uncovered by Burgoon and Hale (1987) include formality, composure, equality, and dominance.

Love styles and self-monitoring both represent various ways of considering and approaching dating relationships. As a consequence, individuals differing in self-monitoring and/or love styles may differ in the way they interpret relational messages from their partner. For example, eros lovers (and high self-monitors) may be likely to interpret their partner's (or partners') behavior as indicative of a great deal of intimacy. As a consequence, the following research questions are posited.

Research Question 2: How do love styles correlate with relational message interpretation?

Research Question 3: How does self-monitoring correlate with relational message interpretation?

The Impact of Being in Love

Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) found that being in love was correlated with both self-monitoring and love styles. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 6: People in love will be lower self-monitors, higher erotic and agapic lovers, and lower ludic lovers than those individuals not in love.

From these results, Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) argue that falling in love causes a person to change their level of self-monitoring and love styles. If falling in love does cause broad changes in self-perceptions, it is possible that correlations among self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message interpretations are spurious. For example, if falling in love increases both self-monitoring and the love style of eros, the correlation between these latter variables would be positive but spurious.

To identify potentially spurious relationships, partial correlations among self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message interpretation will be performed, controlling for whether or not participants were in love at the time they participated in the research. If falling in love causes dramatic changes as Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) suggest, partial correlations between love styles, self-

monitoring, and relational message interpretation while controlling for being in love should be much smaller than the corresponding zero-order correlations. If partial correlations remain significant, the relationship between love styles and self-monitoring and relational message interpretation is not dependent upon being in love. Therefore, a final research question is presented.

Research Question 4: Will zero-order correlations between love styles, self-monitoring, and relational message interpretations differ from their partial correlations when controlling for whether participants are in love?

Methods

Participants

Two-hundred-nine undergraduates (107 females, 51.2%; 101 males, 48.5%; and one person who did indicate their sex) at a medium-size Midwestern university voluntarily participated. Participation partially fulfilled a research requirement for either a public speaking or interpersonal communication class.

Procedures

Participants arrived at the laboratory and were initially asked to read and sign an informed consent form. Once the consent form was completed, participants were given a questionnaire and the experimenter read a statement describing the nature of the research. Participants first completed Love Attitude (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) and Self-Monitoring Scales (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984; Snyder, 1974). Respondents were then asked to recall the most recent conversation they had with a

relational partner that lasted at least ten minutes. Given this conversation, they were asked to complete the Relational Message Scales (Burgoon and Hale, 1987).¹ Participants were then asked a number of demographic and relational questions. Upon completing the final measure, respondents were debriefed in writing. Following the debriefing, questions were solicited and answered if offered, participants were thanked for their participation, and excused.

Instrumentation

For all scales, items were coded such that high scores represent high levels of the variable in question.

Love styles. Love styles were measured using Hendrick and Hendrick's (1986) Love Attitude Scale. This scale consists of 42 Likert-type items, each accompanied by a five-interval response scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Seven items tap each of the six love styles. Reliabilities were acceptable but not outstanding for eros ($\alpha = .60$), ludus ($\alpha = .71$), storge ($\alpha = .64$), pragma ($\alpha = .75$), mania ($\alpha = .62$), and agape ($\alpha = .77$).

Self-monitoring. Self-monitoring was measured with two scales. First, self-monitoring was measured with Snyder's (1974) 25-item, true-false, scale. The reliability for this scale was found to be acceptable ($\alpha = .71$). Self-monitoring was also measured with Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) Modified Self-Monitoring Scale. Lennox and Wolfe's 13-item scale is composed of two factors, the ability to modify self-presentation (measured with seven items), and the sensitivity to the self-expressions of others (measured with six items). Both ability to modify self-

presentation ($\alpha = .79$) and sensitivity to the self-expressions of others ($\alpha = .75$) factors were found to exhibit acceptable reliabilities.

Relational messages. Dimensions of relational message scales were measured with the scale developed by Burgoon and Hale (1987). Most of the factors exhibited acceptable reliability including immediacy-affection (six items, $\alpha = .76$), similarity-depth (four items, $\alpha = .59$), receptivity-trust (five items, $\alpha = .88$), composure (four items, $\alpha = .87$), dominance (two items, $\alpha = .76$), and equality (two items, $\alpha = .75$). The two items measuring formality, however, were weakly correlated. As a consequence, a single item measured this factor.

Results

Because three measures of self-monitoring are being used, it is enlightening to consider their inter-correlations. The matrix of correlations between the original Snyder (1974) and the two dimensions of the Lennox and Wolfe scale are presented in Table 1. There are two particularly interesting aspects to these data. First, Snyder's scale correlates substantially with Lennox and Wolfe's ability to modify self-presentation dimension but is uncorrelated with Lennox and Wolfe's sensitivity to the self-expression of others dimension. Second, the two factors in Lennox and Wolfe's scale are significantly, but not strongly correlated. These data are consistent with other investigations using both these scales (e.g., Johnson and Mongeau, 1993; Wimpee, 1988). Intercorrelations among the six love styles are presented in Table 2.

Tables 1 and 2 about here

Love Styles and Self-Monitoring

Zero-order correlations among the six love styles and various measures of self-monitoring are presented in Table 3. Hypothesis 1 predicted that self-monitoring would be positively correlated with eros. Data are consistent with that prediction only for the two Lennox and Wolfe dimensions. The Snyder scale failed to correlate significantly with eros.

Table 3 about here

Hypothesis 2 predicted that self-monitoring would be positively correlated with ludus. Data are consistent with this hypothesis for the Snyder and Lennox and Wolfe's ability to modify self-presentation dimension. The correlation between ludus and Lennox and Wolfe's sensitivity to the self-expression dimension is insignificant and very small.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that self-monitoring would be negatively correlated with storge. Data are inconsistent with this hypotheses because correlations between storge and all self-monitoring dimensions are insignificant.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that self-monitoring would be negatively correlated with pragma. Data are not consistent with this prediction.

Pragma was significantly and positively correlated with Snyder and neared significance ($p = .056$) with the ability to modify self-presentation subscale.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that self-monitoring should be negatively correlated with agape. Data are inconsistent with this hypothesis. The only significant correlation, between agape and sensitivity to the self-presentation, was positive.

Finally, research question 1 asked if self-monitoring would be correlated with mania. Data indicate that only Snyder's scale was significantly correlated with mania and the correlation was positive.

Love Styles and Relational Message Interpretation

Research question 2 asked how love styles would correlate with the interpretation of relational message dimensions. Data relevant to this research question are also presented in Table 4. Data in Table 4 indicate that the love styles of pragma and mania were uncorrelated with all relational message dimensions. These love styles, therefore, will not be discussed.

Table 4 about here

The love style of eros correlated significantly with five of the seven relational message dimensions. Eros was positively correlated with immediacy/affection, similarity/depth, receptivity/trust, composure, and equality. Eros was not significantly correlated with formality or dominance.

Nearly the opposite pattern of correlations emerged for ludus. Ludus correlated significantly with six of the seven relational message dimensions. Ludus was negatively correlated with immediacy/affection, receptivity trust, composure, and equality. Ludus was positively and significantly correlated with formality and dominance. The only relational message dimension uncorrelated with ludus was similarity-depth.

Storge correlated significantly with three of the seven relational message dimensions. Storge was positively correlated with similarity-depth and receptivity-trust, and was negatively correlated with dominance.

The pattern of correlations for agape is similar to that discussed for eros. Agape was positively and significantly correlated with five relational message dimensions: Immediacy-affection, similarity-depth, receptivity-trust, composure, and equality. Agape was uncorrelated with formality and dominance.

Self-Monitoring and Relational Message Interpretation

Research Question 3 asked how self monitoring would correlate with relational message interpretation. Data relevant to this question are presented in Table 5. These data indicate that the ability to modify self-presentation factor from Lennox and Wolfe (1984) does not correlate with any relational message dimension. Lennox and Wolfe's sensitivity to the self-expression of others correlated significantly and positively with immediacy-affection and receptivity-trust. Finally, Snyder's

(1974) measure correlated significantly and positively with dominance and formality.

Table 6 about here

The Impact of Being in Love

Hypothesis 6 predicted that being in love would influence the extent to which a person was a self-monitor and would advocate various love styles. Data relevant to this question are presented in Table 6.

Table 5 about here

Table 6 indicates that, consistent with Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) those individuals in love scored lower on Snyder's (1974) self-monitoring scale than did those individuals who were not in love. Scores on the Lennox and Wolfe's self-monitoring dimensions differed by whether or not participants were in love, however, these differences were significant only at the .10 level. Interestingly, individuals in love were less able to modify their self-presentations but were more sensitive to the self-expressions of others.

Four of the six love styles exhibited significant differences depending on whether or not participants were in love. These data are also presented in Table 6. Compared to their counterparts who were not in love, participants in love were higher in eros, pragma, and agape and

were lower in ludus. Those in love and those not in love did not differ in strogre and mania.

Finally (and not surprisingly), being in love strongly influenced the interpretation of relational messages. These data are also presented in Table 6. Those in love perceived their partner as sending messages containing more immediacy-affection, receptivity-trust, composure, and equality and less dominance than partners who were not in love.

The Impact of Love: Partial Correlation Analyses

Data in Table 6 indicate that participants who report being in love also report different levels of self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message interpretations. If, as Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) suggest, falling in love causes changes in all these variables, the correlations observed in Tables 3 and 4 could be spurious. The correlation between self-monitoring and eros, for example, may be significant because they both have a common cause of falling in love. As a consequence, partial correlations were performed on all variables correlated with love styles. Partial correlations between self-monitoring and love styles controlling for being in love are presented in Table 3. Partial correlations between love styles and relational message interpretations controlling for being in love are presented in Table 4.

Love styles and self-monitoring. Partial correlations in Table 3 indicate that controlling for being in love does attenuate correlations between self-monitoring and love styles to a small extent. All pairs of

variables with significant zero-order correlations, however, also exhibited significant partial correlations.

As was observed with self-love styles and self-monitoring, partial correlations between love styles and relational message interpretations tended to be somewhat smaller than their zero-order counterparts, though many were still significant (see Table 4). Eleven of the 19 significant zero-order correlations were still significant when being in love is controlled for. Moreover, three partial correlations (between storge and immediacy-affection, composure, and formality) were significant when the zero-order correlations were not.

Discussion

Social science research on love has blossomed over the past decade (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992a, 1992b; Sternberg and Barnes, 1988). One focus of this research has been on typologies of love such as Lee's (1973, 1988) love styles. One of the many interesting results using these love styles, is Hendrick and Hendrick's (1988) finding that individuals who report being in love also report higher levels of various love styles, higher self-monitoring, higher self-esteem, and lower sensation seeking. From these data, Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) claim that falling in love causes a person to go through a variety of changes including love styles and personality characteristics such as self-monitoring.

Research on self-monitoring, on the other hand, indicates that high and low self-monitors take quite different approaches to the development of committed premarital relationships (for a review of this literature,

see Snyder & Simpson, 1987). High self-monitors tend to take an uncommitted approach to dating relationships, date multiple partners, and engage in sex on the first date. Low self-monitors, on the other hand, tend to take a more committed approach to dating relationships, look for a partner with an attractive personality, and tend to exhibit slow steady growth in their relationships. These data linking self-monitoring and dating relationships provides an alternative explanation for the Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) results. Differences in self-monitoring may influence the extent to which a person is likely to fall in love, the level of commitment they exhibit, and the love styles they advocate.

The present investigation was designed to test between these opposing interpretations. Data from the present investigation indicate that those individuals in love were higher self-monitors, and scored higher in eros, agape, pragma, and lower in ludus. With the exception of the increase in pragma, these data are consistent with Hendrick and Hendrick (1988). The present data also indicate that self-monitoring is positively correlated with eros, ludus, pragma, and agape.

If the Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) interpretation is correct, the correlations between love styles and self-monitoring are spurious, i.e., a function of the common antecedent of falling in love. As a consequence, both zero-order and partial correlations were performed between love styles and self-monitoring and relational message interpretations. If Hendrick and Hendrick (1988) are correct, partial correlations when controlling for whether participants are in love

should be nonsignificant (i.e., at or near zero). If love styles are related to self-monitoring regardless of one's love status, partial correlations should be of approximately the same magnitude as corresponding zero-order correlations.

Results indicate that when compared to their zero-order counterparts, partial correlations between love styles and self-monitoring and relational message interpretations were attenuated slightly. Variables that exhibited significant zero-order correlations, however, also tended to exhibit significant partial correlations.

As a consequence, there is some support for Hendrick and Hendrick's (1988) position that falling in love changes both love styles and personality. This support comes in the small reduction of the partial correlations, when compared to the zero-order correlations. There is also support for the alternative contention that the relationship between love styles, self-monitoring, and relational message interpretation is not exclusively a function of falling or being in love. The significant partial correlations indicate that self-monitoring influences the extent to which individuals will seek out relationships with varying levels of intimacy and commitment.

Future research should focus on how falling in and out of love influences the relationship between love styles, self-monitoring, and relational message interpretation. Specifically, a complete test of Hendrick and Hendrick's (1988) hypotheses would involve a longitudinal investigation. Specifically, a study should follow the same set of individuals as they fall into and out of love. If Hendrick and Hendrick

(1988) are correct, levels of self-monitoring and love styles should rise and fall as the individual falls in and out of love.

Love Styles and Relational Message Interpretations

A more complete understanding of love styles can be gained by investigating how these love styles correlate with relational message interpretation. Relational message interpretations represent the ways that individuals consider themselves, their partner, and both individuals within the context of the relationship (Burgoon and Hale, 1984). Investigating the correlation between love styles and relational message interpretation can provide information on how individuals who advocate differing love styles interpret their partner's communication and, as a consequence, the relationship itself.

The love styles of eros and agape generate a similar pattern of correlations with relational message dimensions. Individuals high in eros and agape report receiving messages from their partners containing considerable immediacy-affection, similarity-depth, receptivity-trust, composure, and equality. Put another way, highly erotic and agapic lovers perceive their partner's sending messages containing a good deal of intimacy. This is consistent with the passion and commitment implicit in these love styles.

The opposite pattern of correlations appears for ludus. Highly ludic individuals perceive their partner as sending messages containing less immediacy-affection, less receptivity-trust, less composure, less equality, and greater dominance. This pattern of relational message interpretation is consistent with the ludic lovers' orientation toward

less committed relationships. The greater ratings of dominance might reflect the ludic lover's concern for controlling the level of intimacy and commitment in the relationship.

Finally, storgic lovers perceive their partners as sending messages high in similarity-depth, receptivity-trust, and low in dominance. This appears consistent with the caring and compassion storgic lovers feel for their partner.

Love Styles Measurement Questions

There were two curious sets of results generated by the Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) love scales. Results with the eros and pragma scales are difficult to explain given Lee's (1973, 1988) original conceptualizations of these love styles. These difficult results are the similar correlations generated by eros and agape and the lack of results generated by pragma.

Similarity of Eros and Agape. It is somewhat curious that the love styles that are most strongly correlated are eros and agape. Eros and agape also correlate in a similar manner with relational message dimensions. These results are difficult to explain because the physical passion and the emphasis on the partner's physical attractiveness characteristic of eros do not seem necessarily consistent with the all-giving agapic love style.

The consistency between eros and agape can be found in Hendrick and Hendrick's (1986) description of the what their eros scale measures. Eros, according to Hendrick and Hendrick, represents "Strong physical preferences, early attraction, and intensity of emotion...along with

strong commitment to the lover" (1986, p. 400). According to Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) eros is consistent with both sexual passion and commitment. This focus on both passion and commitment, however, is inconsistent with Lee's description of eros. Lee (1988) describes eros as focusing on the partner's physical characteristics, and the excitement and passion that is felt when a partner with those characteristics is found. Lee does assert that later in relationships eros lovers exhibit a more relaxed relationship. This more relaxed style, however, is described as being a combination of eros and storge rather than being a characteristic of eros alone.

In summary, it appears as though the measurement of eros contains commitment that is not consistent with Lee's (1973, 1988) formulation of the construct. The other love style where there appears to be a measurement question is pragma.

What's on the 'shopping list'? It was expected that low self-monitors would exhibit higher levels of pragma than high self-monitors. This hypothesis was disconfirmed as the only significant correlation, between pragma and Snyder's (1974) self-monitoring scale, was positive. Correlations between pragma and all relational message dimensions were insignificant.

According to Lee (1988) the pragmatic lover "has a..."shopping list" of practical everyday qualities that he or she desires in a beloved" (p. 47). The shopping list, according to Lee (1988), is likely to contain sociological characteristics such as social class, religion, and political affiliation. The list is also likely to contain a

preference that the potential partner to have similar interests in activities and hobbies.

Again, Lee's description stands in rather stark contrast to measurement. Rather than practical everyday qualities, the Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) scale concentrates on qualities that will only be relevant in a long-term relationship. Hendrick and Hendrick's (1986) pragma measure taps how the partner will reflect on the individual, their career, and their family. While these characteristics may be relevant in deciding the extent to which a person might make an adequate marital partner, it is unlikely that these characteristics might be relevant in earlier stages of relationships. Moreover, the extent to which the partner might reflect well on one's career may not be relevant to college students. Although it would be admittedly difficult to guess what will be on each person's "shopping list" it is important to consider what impact this scale might have on the relationships between pragma and other measures.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, it can be concluded that self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message dimensions are correlated in consistent and explainable ways. Moreover, it also appears as though being in love has, at best, a weak influence on these relationships. Moreover, it appears as though there is inconsistency between Lee's descriptions of the love styles of eros and pragma and how these styles are measured in Hendrick and Hendrick's (1986) Love Attitude Scale. Future research should investigate how this inconsistency may influence the extent to

which results generated from the scale truly reflect the love styles as Lee described them.

Notes

- ¹ Respondents who had never been in love were asked to report on how they felt the conversation would go.

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Table 1.

Matrix of correlations among self-monitoring scales.

	SMS-25	LW-SSEO	LW-AMSP
SMS-25	---		
LW-SSEO	.06	---	
LW-AMSP	.57*	.20*	---

* $p < .01$

Table 2. Intercorrelations of the six love styles.

	Eros	Ludus	Storge	Pragma	Agape	Mania
Eros	----					
Ludus	-.20**	----				
Storge	-.05	-.25***	----			
Pragma	.16*	.15*	.04	----		
Agape	.44***	-.41***	.10	.00	----	
Mania	.26***	-.05	-.07	.15*	.34***	----

Note:

* .05 > p > .01

** .01 > p > .001

*** p < .001

Table 3. How love styles correlate with self-monitoring measures.

Zero-order correlations

	<u>Eros</u>	<u>Ludus</u>	<u>Storge</u>	<u>Pragma</u>	<u>Mania</u>	<u>Agape</u>
Snyder	.05	.34***	-.10	.14*	-.07	.16*
LW - Sensitivity	.20**	-.01	.09	.11	.16*	.09
LW - Ability	.14*	.27***	-.05	.13	.02	.01

Partial correlations controlling for currently in love.

	<u>Eros</u>	<u>Ludus</u>	<u>Storge</u>	<u>Pragma</u>	<u>Mania</u>	<u>Agape</u>
Snyder	-.01	.31***	-.10	.15*	-.01	.16*
LW - Sensitivity	.19**	.01	.10	.09	.14*	.08
LW - Ability	.17*	.25***	-.05	.16	.06	.02

Note: * .05 > p > .01
 ** .01 > p > .001
 *** p < .001

Table 4. Zero-order and partial correlations between love styles and relational message dimensions.

Zero-Order Correlations

	<u>Eros</u>	<u>Ludus</u>	<u>Storge</u>	<u>Pragma</u>	<u>Agape</u>	<u>Mania</u>
Immediacy-Affection	.29***	-.14*	.11	.10	-.05	.22**
Similarity-Depth	.22**	-.11	.19**	.07	-.02	.14*
Receptivity-Trust	.25***	-.14*	.16*	.00	-.11	.17*
Composure	.17*	-.14*	.13	.07	-.06	.16*
Formality	-.06	.15*	-.12	.02	-.04	-.10
Dominance	-.06	.26**	-.19**	-.02	.07	-.08
Equality	.30***	-.16*	.05	.00	-.07	.21**

Partial Correlations Controlling for Currently In Love

	<u>Eros</u>	<u>Ludus</u>	<u>Storge</u>	<u>Pragma</u>	<u>Agape</u>	<u>Mania</u>
Immediacy-Affection	.22***	-.06	.13*	.07	-.05	.14*
Similarity-Depth	.16*	-.05	.21***	.04	-.03	.07
Receptivity-Trust	.19**	-.07	.17**	-.02	-.12	.10
Composure	.08	-.06	.15*	.04	-.07	.07
Formality	-.03	.12*	-.12*	.02	-.04	-.07
Dominance	-.02	.23***	-.20**	-.01	.08	-.04
Equality	.23***	-.09	.07	-.04	-.08	.13*

Note: * .05 > p > .01
 ** .01 > p > .001
 *** p < .001

Table 5. Correlations between measures of self-monitoring and relational message dimensions.

Lennox and Wolfe			
	<u>Snyder</u>	<u>Sensitivity</u>	<u>Ability</u>
Immediacy-Affection	-.09	.18*	-.03
Similarity-Depth	-.08	.05	-.06
Receptivity-Trust	-.09	.15*	-.06
Composure	-.12	.12	.00
Formality	.14*	.01	.03
Dominance	.26***	-.02	.07
Equality	-.11	.06	.01

Note: * .05 > p > .01
 ** .01 > p > .001
 *** p < .001

Table 6. The impact of being in love on self-monitoring, love styles, and relational message interpretation.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Not In Love</u>	<u>In Love</u>	<u>t(205)</u>
Snyder	14.03	12.60	2.42*
L&W - Ability to Modify	3.28	3.12	1.77
L&W - Sensitivity	3.48	3.63	-1.66
Eros	3.62	3.92	-4.45***
Ludus	2.89	2.55	3.43***
Storge	3.70	3.64	0.70
Pragma	2.79	2.99	-2.18*
Mania	3.09	3.13	-0.47
Agape	3.37	3.70	-4.09***
Immediacy-Affection	3.60	4.05	-5.10***
Similarity-Depth	3.66	4.05	-4.00***
Receptivity-Trust	3.92	4.28	3.89***
Composure	3.50	4.12	-5.17***
Formality	2.24	2.10	1.47
Dominance	2.95	2.65	2.24*
Equality	3.85	4.37	-4.89***

Note: * .05 > p > .01
 ** .01 > p > .001
 *** .p < .001